from big works like provision of radial wells to small works like provision of additional taps, replacement of corroded water pipelines etc. are in progress at all times on Indian Railways which is a continuous process.

There may be occasional short supplies because of electrical load shedding by State Electricity Board, short supply of water by Municipalities, equipment breakdowns, etc. Under such circumstances, Railways endeavour to rectify the situation in co-ordination with the concerned local authority to ensure regular supply of water to its bonafide passengers.

Sometimes in summer, supply of drinking water to stations falling in arid zones falls short of demand due to lowering of ground water table, lesser supplies by municipality and higher passenger load during summer, in general. Railway does its best to overcome such a situation by providing/ supplementing mobile water trollies & matkas for making water available to the passengers. Many NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations) also come forward to assist Railways in the endeavour.

Foreign exchange earned by Palace on Wheels

*429. SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH LIBRA:
DR. ABRAR AHMED:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) what has been the average occupancy of 'Palace on Wheels', the luxury train during the year 2002-2003;

(b) the foreign exchange earned by it during the above period; and

(c) what further steps are being taken by Government to make the train more popular for tourists?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): (a) The average occupancy of Palace on Wheels during the year 2002-03 has been 42.98%.

(b) The foreign exchange earned during this period amounts to Rs. 1035.03 lakhs.

(c) As per the Agreement between the Indian Railways and the Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation (RTDC), the responsibility of marketing, selling of tickets and hospitality services of the train are with the RTDC while the Railways only provide the necessary facilities for

operation of the train. RTDC markets the train through its nominated General Sales Agents (GSAs) in various countries and by participating in major international tourism fairs such as World Travel Mart, International Tourism Borse (ITB)-Berlin, Dubai Festival as well as in the domestic tourism marts.

Kitchen/organic gardening

*431. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether kitchen gardening can be of great help to propagate the cause of environment; and

(b) if so, what steps are being taken by Government to create awareness among households about the potentials of kitchen as well as organic gardening?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI RAJNATH SINGH): (a) and (b) Kitchen Garden refers to growing of crops around the premises of the house utilizing the home wastes, which helps in maximum utilization of the backyard space and in supplementing day-to-day rquirements of crops such as fruits, flowers and vegetables for the household.

Although, the Government is not implementing any scheme exclusively for promotion of kitchen gardens, the programmes being implemented for development of Horticulture have enabled the availability of quality seeds, planting material and improved technologies for growing crops including kitchen gardening.The Government of India is promoting organic gardening through the use of organic sources of nutrients such as green manure, farm yard manure, compost, bio-fertilizers and vermin-compost alongwith use of bio-pesticides/bio-agents for integrated management of pests and diseases.

Use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides

*433. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN :
SHRI M. V. RAJASEKHARAN :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state.

(a) whether Government are considering to emphasize minimum use chemical fertilizers and pesticides for agricultural production; and